

# **CITIZENS' INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION TRUST**

## **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING**

July 1, 2003

Metro Dade Center

111 First Street, Room 18-1

### **Summary of Minutes**

#### **CITT MEMBERS:**

##### **Luis Morse, Chairman**

James Reeder

Mike Abrams

Clarence Days

Marc Buoniconti

#### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Nestor Toledo	OPTM/CITT Interim Secretariat
Virginia Diaz	OPTM Special Assistant Director
Patricia David	OPTM Special Assistant Director
Bruce Libhaber	Dade County Assist Attorney
Alicia Gonzalez	Media Relations Group
Myra Patino	Reynolds Smith & Hills
John Prats	OPTM Special Assists. Policy
Hilda M. Fernandez	Senior Aide Mayor's Office
Mayra Diaz	OPTM
Seraphin W. Bernard	MDT
Aurelia Vasquez	OPTM
Girish Kumar	HNTB
Bobbie Mumford	B. Mumford and Company
Carmen Morris	Carmen Morris And Associates
Sharon Becca	Parsons Brinckeroff
Kevin Stein	The Ptolemy Group
Jill Jennings	THE Ptolemy GROUP
Julio Menache	Metric Engineering

## **I. ROLL CALL**

Nestor Toledo

With a quorum being present, Luis Morse Chairperson, called the meeting of the External Affairs Committee to order, at 9:00 a.m.

## **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Morse requested for a motion to approve the Minutes June 3, 2003. The motion was made by Mr. Buoniconti, seconded by Mr. Abrams and carried with out dissent.

## **III. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Hon. Luis Morse, Chairman of the External Affairs Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

None

## **V. REPORTS**

Update of pending items

Presentations by Project Public Information Officers (PIO):

Patrice Koonce Rosemond, OPTM Chief of Public Involvement, introduced the Public Information Officers to discuss public involvement activities for the projects listed on the Agenda. She stated each project budget includes funds for public outreach activities such as public meetings, project newsletters and websites.

North Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)  
Bobbie Mumford, Public Information Officer

A copy of this presentation was distributed to CITT Board members at the meeting and is on file with the Minutes in the permanent record.

Ms. Mumford stated the North Corridor project is strongly supported by the impacted communities as well as UP-PAC Underrepresented Peoples Political Action Committee; which has been lead by Commissioner Betty Ferguson for approx. 25 years. The community favours the Metrorail Extension along 27 Ave Ms. Mumford emphasized and the community has been actively involved in the project.

Mr. Buoniconti questioned the purpose of these presentations stating that this is the External Affairs Sub-Committee, which is more concerned with public awareness, public support, and public impact. It appears that this type of presentation would be more appropriate for the Project Review Subcommittee.

Ms. Virginia Diaz explained all the people making presentations are public involvement consultants for the projects listed on the agenda and the focus of

their presentations is public awareness, community involvement and community outreach.

Mr. Morse asked when does the CITT's involvement begin? How are we going to inform the community as to the job that was entrusted to us. Ms. Diaz replied that your involvement has already begun. As members of the Trust your role plays a vital function in taking the lead in informing the public of the developments.

MIC/Earlington Heights Connector  
Sharon Becca, Senior Environmental Planner

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Mr. Abrams and Mr. Morse discussed briefly the rail connector between Miami International Airport and the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC), known as the MIC/MIA Connector. Mr. Abrams then asked whether the MIC/MIA connector would be funded from Surtax funds? Ms. Becca responded that this project would be funded from Airport Funds not from the surtax.

Mr. Morse and Mr. Abrams discussed managing the public involvement component of the projects to be under one management as opposed to managing each individual project with individual public relations firms.

Ms. Diaz responded that we are finding that all people must be informed of the various projects not just the people that are being impacted. It is clear that the people want to see how the money is being spent. We are trying to change the way we do business where before we did not have the money to go out there and inform the public on a broad scale as to what MDT or the County was doing with transportation. Now that we have a transportation agenda and the money for the projects and we are trying to get the word out much better.

Mr. Abram asked whether every major project has outside consultants that are managed by OPTM staff. He further stated that in his opinion OPTM would be better served to manage consultants with a coordinated approach that goes beyond one project. That could happen if the public involvement activities are extricated [from the Prime contractor] and are managed directly by OPTM staff. He asked that the Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. Morse, give this proposal some consideration.

Mr. Morse responded that there are several existing projects and it would be difficult to change the procedure now. However, he would like to see a plan for future projects i.e. East West; projects online, which still have pending contracts that have not been awarded and maybe bring a proposal of integrating a centralized public information function. He continued that, for clarity, he can see why we should not have the PIO to the projects beholding to the engineering firm. Mr. Morse requested some proposals on the subject. Mr. Alvarez responded that Board members would see the proposals.

Mr. Buoniconti stated there must be a more proactive way to inform the citizens, after all more information is better than less. We can certainly combine the projects and get the information out instead of doing it in separate phases. Lets do it as a whole to show consistency

Mr. Abrams to Mr. Morse, if you think there is some merit to the direction, these types of services lend themselves better to an RFQ process than they do to an RFP process. Take that into consideration and perhaps present something at the next External Affairs meeting. It also has to be financially sound as well.

South Miami-Dade Busway Extension to Florida City - Segment II Design  
Kevin Stein, Public Information Officer

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Mr. Stein began by stating he is the Public Information Officer for the design Segment II of the Busway Extension Project and is a sub consultant to Metric Engineering.

Mr. Morse asked Mr. Stein to invite the CITT members to all community meetings for all the projects, especially the members that live in the impacted areas. Ms. Diaz added the CITT Board Members have been added to the information distribution list for all current projects.

Mr. Abrams stated that the more information that is distributed the better, maybe it could be distributed quarterly. Mr. Alvarez stated that OPTM has a 90-day outlook that is prepared for the Manager and the BCC.

Mr. Abrams continued to say if you have a simple, accessible and intelligible update on the projects people could have a mechanism that shows we are trying to give out the information to anyone that could access it.

Mr. Morse stated that he would like to publicize what the other CITT committees are doing. For example LtCol. Colmenares' tour [Project Review Committee] of the Metrorail maintenance yard are the types of things that need to be publicized. Therefore, the public will be aware that the CITT is investigating and analysing the projects for further reference.

Mr. Morse stated he would like to mention what the other committees are doing for example LtCol. Colmenares' tour of the maintenance yards. These are types of things that need to be publicized this way the Public is aware that the CITT is investigating and analysing the projects for further reference.

Mr. Libhaber restated that the members are asking for a systematic 4month release, this committee is not able to bind the entire Trust. Mr. Abrams clarified that what Bruce is saying is that this motion should be sent to the full CITT for approval. Mr. Alvarez stated that the Trust should take action directing OPTM to put together a quarterly report.

Marc Buoniconti made a motion directing OPTM to prepare a quarterly report and forward that directive to the full CITT for approval. The motion was seconded by member Mike Abrams, and carried without dissent.

Mr. Abrams stated that he would put it on the Agenda for the next CITT Board meeting.

South Miami-Dade Busway Extension to Florida City – Construction & US1  
Reconstruction Project Scott Brand, Public Information Officer

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Mr. Brand described the project limits, schedule and gave an overview of the public involvement plan for this project. He noted that the US-1 Reconstruction Project is an FDOT project and OPTM is managing the construction for the State.

Mr. Buoniconti asked if the project website is linked to the Miami Dade Transit (MDT) website and Mr. Brand responded yes there are links to County websites including MDT.

Mr. Buoniconti asked Mr. Alvarez how is the public informed of road closures? Mr. Alvarez responded the businesses are informed and beyond that signs that are placed ahead of time describing any delays or alternate routes or the Media is informed. The Maintenance of Traffic plans are also available on the project website. Mr. Morse requested from Ms. Diaz information on dedicated Radio Station to inform the public of detours and traffic problems.

Mr. Morse introduced CITT Board Members Mr. Clarence Days and the Mr. James Reeder, as they arrived after the roll call.

Northeast Passenger Activity Center Alternatives Analysis  
Alicia Gonzalez, PIO Myra Patino, Project Manager

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Ms. Gonzalez introduced Myra Patino to provide a description of the project goals and limits, noting that they are in the process of data collection, the first public meeting has not been held. Alicia then reviewed the public involvement plans for this project as described in the handout.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Report on the Regional Transportation Authority:

Ms. Diaz informed the group that Governor Bush signed legislation in June 2003 that created the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) adding there will be some issues coming to the BCC about funding of the RTA.

Part of the RTA legislation mandates two items:

- 1) Maintenance of Effort to the RTA in the amount of \$1.6 million, this represents the current annual support that each County gives to Tri-Rail.
- 2) Provide \$2.6 million dollars annually for the RTA to leverage federal transportation funds.

The BCC will eventually have to make a decision as how this organization will be funded and one of the potential sources is surtax proceeds.

Mr. Morse asked whether the surtax monies pay for the RTA? Mr. Alvarez responded that it was not assumed that the RTA would be funded out of sales tax proceeds. Only the yearly \$1.6 million annual subsidy was assumed to continue to Tri- Rail. If the CITT agrees to utilize the surtax dollars to fund the RTA it may do so, however, it would be necessary to revisit all the projects to see which ones do not get done or get deferred in order to provide funding to the

RTA. He emphasized that it would be up to the CITT to change the plan in such a way to free up funds for the RTA.

Mr. Abrams asked if the \$1.6 million is for administrative operations of the RTA? Ms. Diaz replied in the current maintenance of effort Tri-Rail spends those funds for operations.

Mr. Abrams then asked whether the \$2.6 million that each county contributes, would be used to leverage federal dollars? Ms. Diaz responded that those funds could only be used to leverage federal dollars for New Start projects. She further explained that what was originally contemplated is \$8 million dollars which comes from the \$2 license tag fee that was being proposed. In the first year those funds would have produced \$8 million dollars but that language was removed from the bill. Mr. Abrams stated that the County might get matching dollars back that would exceed the contribution for projects that are in the PTP.

Ms. Diaz responded that her concern is that the criteria for New Starts funds clearly states that there must be a dedicated source of funding to leverage federal transportation dollars and must have the capability to fund the operation and maintenance of the existing system and any new projects being proposed.

Mr. Abrams asked for a definition of New Start funds? Ms. Diaz briefly explained that New Starts is funds provided in the federal surface transportation bill that funds rail projects. To qualify for New Start funds a project must go through a planning process to show the federal government that the criteria have been met. One of those criteria is developing a 20-year financial plan showing that the current and future transit system can be operated and maintained. She then added that staff would provide the board members with a Dictionary of Transportation Terms at the next meeting.

Mr. Abrams asked if it is possible that those dollars can become fungible and come back to be used for the transit projects in the PTP. Ms. Diaz explained that the RTA Board sets its' own priorities and decides how those funds are to be used. One year they may benefit Dade County the other may benefit Palm Beach County. There is nothing enforceable in that bill that requires the RTA to set aside funds to leverage federal dollars specifically for Miami-Dade County.

Mr. Buoniconti advised everyone to keep in mind the regional aspect of transportation where improvements in Broward and in Palm Beach counties may also improve Miami-Dade County by alleviating the traffic to improve the commute. He then asked whether the RTA Board had been designated?

Ms. Diaz replied that there is language in the Bill stating that Board will be made up of nine (9) voting members with two (2) appointees from each County, one (1) member appointed by the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation and the Governor can make three (3) appointments.

Mr. Morse requested that the County Attorney provide an interpretation of the RTA bill. Ms. Diaz explained the request to fund the RTA would have to go through the budget process and at that time it would be open to the Board of County Commissioners and then they would decide or recommend where the funding would come from.

She concluded by encouraging the Board members to be part of the public involvement process stating that as members of a public board it is important to be fully informed. She also stated that CITT members can assist the County in

lobbying for federal or state funds and can choose projects they feel they can best support.

Resolution on Request to Amend the PTP In For Newly Created Municipalities:

Mr. Libhaber introduced the resolution that Mr. Cosgrove requested at the last CITT meeting.

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO AMEND MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ORDINANCE NO. 02-116 (THE PEOPLES TRANSPORTATION PLAN) TO PROVIDE THAT MUNICIPALITIES CREATED AFTER NOVEMBER 5, 2002 SHALL RECEIVE A PRO RATA SHARE OF THE COUNTY'S SHARE OF SALES SURTAX PROCEEDS.

The foregoing resolution was offered by member James Reeder, who moved its adoption. The motion was second by member Mike Abrams, and upon being put to the vote, the motion failed.

Mr. Abrams recommended that Mr. Morse speak to members of the Dade Delegation that he knows to lobby for some of the projects being proposed and that the Conference would begin in August.

Ms. Diaz stated it is important to start to show CITT members involvement and that she was given the approval from intergovernmental affairs to draft a letter or resolution supporting the appropriations for the projects. The CITT support would be necessary. Mr. Abrams agreed to give his support.

Mr. Buoniconti volunteered to represent the CITT when the quarterly update comes and would be available to answer questions to the media.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.